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ABSTRACT

A year-long teaching internship in lieu of student teaching has been offered by the College of Education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, with special funding targeted toward individuals who already had received undergraduate degrees in areas of study other than education and who were seeking teacher certification at the secondary level. The program was later expanded to include other students, in both elementary and secondary education. The program includes intensive courses during the summer, a teaching internship throughout the school year, and coursework on campus during the summer following the internship. A survey was conducted of 107 individuals who had completed teaching internships, and employment information was obtained for an additional 33 interns. The study presented the following tentative conclusions: (1) those who complete the internship are committed to the profession; by the time 2 years had elapsed since program completion, all interns had applied for teaching positions; (2) a very small percentage of the interns who had been certified for a year or more reported they had never taught; and (3) the primary career pattern for interns is to enter teaching after completing the program or after graduate school and teach every year. (Contains 18 references.) (JDD)

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Teacher Interns' Commitment to Teaching

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Teacher Interns' Commitment to Teaching

There has been emphasis for several years on changing teacher preparation programs to improve the quality of teachers. Impetus for program improvement has been supplied by changes in accreditation procedures by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and external criticism (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986). Along with strengthening the knowledge background of prospective teachers, a recommended change has been expansion of student teaching into a year-long internship experience (Andrew, 1990; Darling-Hammond, Gendler, & Wise, 1990; Huling-Austin, 1988).

Increasing the amount of time spent in classrooms from student teaching (typically one quarter or one semester) lengthens the teacher preparation program. One way to provide additional time has been to offer extended programs that go beyond the baccalaureate level. Extended programs in teacher education (program beyond the four-year baccalaureate for initial teacher certification) are in the minority (Wong & Osguthorpe, 1993). A survey of teacher preparation institutions offering graduate programs in education showed that only 9% of the institutions had completely converted to the extended program in elementary education, 11% in secondary education. Thirty-six percent of the institutions offered both four-year and extended programs in elementary education and in secondary education. Over half of the institutions continued to offer only the four-year teacher preparation programs in elementary (55%) and secondary (53%) education.

A year-long internship is not implicit in extended programs. Wider acceptance of internship programs for teachers might result once the advantages of such programs are documented. Teaching internship programs are fairly new, and research on their impact, particularly regarding attrition and career patterns of teaching interns after they complete the program, is very limited.

Teacher Career Patterns

As the length of time after becoming certified increases, the percentage of individuals who have taught continuously decreases (Boser, 1989; Chapman, 1986). Some teacher education graduates never teach, with research findings ranging from 14% to 25% (Boser, 1989; Chapman, 1986; Heyns, 1988; Merseth & Beals, 1991) . Of those who enter the profession, young teachers with little experience and those nearing retirement are more likely to leave the profession (Bobbitt, Faupel, & Burns, 1991; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1992; Talbert, 1986). Attrition rates are very similar for elementary and secondary teachers, and for males and females (Bobbitt, Faupel & Burns, 1991).

It is only recently that the reentry behavior of teachers has been examined (Chapman, 1986; Murnane, Singer & Willett, 1988; Talbert, 1986). Chapman included a category for intermittent teachers - those who started teaching, left, and returned to teaching. Murnane, Winger and Willett found between one fourth and one third of the teachers who left teaching during the first eight years later returned to the profession. Cross-sectional studies that do not obtain information about the previous employment

patterns of teachers (and future plans of former teachers not currently teaching) cannot detect reentry behaviors.

The study of career patterns and attrition of those who participate in teaching internship programs has barely begun. Interns have been found to be more likely to be offered teaching positions and to begin teaching immediately after program completion than student teachers in comparable teaching fields (Boser & Wiley, 1988). Guyton, Fox, and Sisk (1991) reported that all but one of the alternatively certified teachers who completed a teaching internship program returned to teach in their respective internship schools the following year. Of the 23 who began the internship year, however, five dropped out before completing the internship.

The UTK Internship Programs

The year-long teaching internship in lieu of student teaching was first offered by the College of Education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the 1985-86 school year. The special program was developed with funding from the Lyndhurst Foundation and was targeted toward individuals who already had received undergraduate degrees in areas of study other than education and who were seeking teacher certification at the secondary level (English, foreign language, science, social studies, mathematics, and psychology). Some of the participants also possessed graduate degrees, and most had been professionally employed in fields other than education, such as engineering, dental hygiene, and veterinary science. The program included intensive courses during the summer, teaching internship throughout the school year, and coursework on campus during the summer following the internship. Interns were paid a stipend during their participation in the program.

The Lyndhurst program continued on this basis for three years. The fourth year of the program (1988-89) was designed for individuals seeking elementary certification. It was in the same year that the College of Education first offered an internship program to other students as an alternative to student teaching. Unlike Lyndhurst fellows, regular program interns did not receive stipends. Ten interns participated in the regular internship program that year, nine in secondary teaching areas and one in elementary education. In 1989-90, the Lyndhurst program expanded to include both elementary and secondary and continued on this basis until 1991-92, when it was limited to science and mathematics.

The regular internship program has expanded in scope and number of interns each year. In the time period between 1988-89, when it was introduced as an option for regular teacher education students, and 1991-92, the internship has evolved from the secondary to the dominant program in the College of Education, with student teaching being phased out in almost all teacher preparation program areas.

Procedures

In the fall of 1992 a survey of all individuals who had completed teaching internships through the 1990-91 school year at the University of Tennessee was initiated. One follow-up mailing was sent to nonrespondents after approximately one month. Telephone calls were placed to those in the area who

had still not responded. Telephone followup calls focused on obtaining information about current employment and mailing address only.

A questionnaire booklet containing items soliciting a maximum of 34 responses plus demographic information was developed. The booklet consisted of two sheets of 11" by 14" paper, folded and stapled in the middle, with items appearing on five of the eight pages.

A total of 168 individuals had completed teaching internships and teacher certification requirements from 1985-86 through 1990-91. Completed questionnaires were received from 107 of the 160 (67%) for whom valid addresses could be obtained (see Table 1). The additional telephone effort to contact those interns who did not return questionnaires resulted in current employment information for thirty-three more interns. Inclusion of employment data for these individuals caused some changes for specific cohorts but had little effect on the overall percentage of those currently employed as teachers. Employment information was obtained for a total of 83% of all interns who completed the program prior to 1991-92.

Employment information for graduates of 1991-92, who were potential first-year teachers when the study was done, was collected as part of the routine follow-up of individuals who completed certification requirements during the preceding year. The initial activity is a mail survey of the interns themselves. Following completion of the mail survey, information regarding employment is sought

Table 1

Data Sources

Year	Program	Number of Interns	No Valid Address	Returned Questionnaires		Employment Ascertained	
1985-86	Lyndhurst (7L)	19	0	12	63%	18	95%
1986-87	Lyndhurst (6L)	18	1	16	94%*	17	94%**
1987-88	Lyndhurst (5L)	14	0	8	57%	10	71%
1988-89	Lyndhurst (4L)	13	0	7	54%	9	69%
1988-89	Regular (4R)	10	2	4	50%*	6	60%**
1989-90	Lyndhurst (3L)	14	0	11	79%	13	93%
1989-90	Regular (3R)	19	4	10	67%*	14	74%**
1990-91	Lyndhurst (2L)	19	1	13	72%*	17	89%**
1990-91	Regular (2R)	42	0	26	62%	36	86%
1991-92	Lyndhurst (1L)	8	0	4	50%	6	75%**
1991-92	Regular (1R)	134	0	103	77%	117	87%**
Total		310	8	214	71%*	263	82%**

*Percentage of those for whom valid addresses were available

**Percentage of all interns, including those for whom there were no valid addresses.

from faculty advisers and the major local school system personnel office. Employment information was available for 123 of 142 (87%)who completed internships during the 1991-92 school year.

Groups are identified in table headings according to the program (Lyndhurst = L, Regular = R) and the number of years which the individuals could have been certified to teach. Interns in the 1L group are former Lyndhurst interns who are in their first year after program completion and could thus be no more than first-year teachers. Interns in the 7L group could be in their seventh year of teaching if they had taught every year after program completion.

Survey respondents represent several teacher certification areas (see Table 2). Inclusion of the 1991-92 interns more than doubled the total numbers of elementary and special education interns. Physical education, instrumental and vocal music interns were also included for the first time among intern survey respondents for the 1991-92 intern group. Female respondents predominate, but this is true of the population of teacher education interns at this particular institution.

Results

The information in Table 3 includes employment information from sources other than returned mail questionnaires and provides the most complete accounting of former interns. The percentage of interns employed as public or private school teachers at the time of the survey in the 1992-93 school year ranged from 41% to 100%. The lowest percentages (41% and 56%) were recorded for those in the first two cohorts of Lyndhurst fellows who were in their sixth (6L) and seventh (7L) years following program completion. The highest percentage (100%) employed as teachers was for reported by the Lyndhurst group in their fourth year after the internship (4L) and the Lyndhurst group in their first year after the internship (1L).

With the exception of the 1990-91 and 1991-92 regular interns (2R and 1R), all of those completing internship programs who responded to the survey indicated they had sought teaching positions at some time (see Table 4). All respondents in five groups reported they had been employed as full-time teachers in public or private schools after completing the internship. Other than the more recently certified interns (2L, 2R and 1R), only three individuals reported never having taught: two from the 1986-87 Lyndhurst group (6L) and one from the 1987-88 Lyndhurst group (5L). It is highly likely that some of the recent program graduates who have never taught will yet become teachers.

The percentage of respondents who had taught every year was lowest for the two groups of Lyndhurst interns who had been in the field the longest (7L and 6L). Both of these groups include individuals who have taught intermittently, interrupting their continuity in the profession for personal reasons or for other types of employment. With the increase in time beyond program completion it is more likely that personal situations will arise to interrupt employment. Also, as time passes individuals become more willing to go back to graduate school. The most recent graduates (2L and 2R) showed lower percentages of continuous teachers than those who had been in the field from three to five years. This may be a direct reflection of the economic factors existing when the recent graduates completed their

Table 2

Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	7L	6L	5L	4L	4R	3L	3R	2L	2R	1L	1R	Total
Primary Certification Area:												
Art	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	0 0%	1 1%	2 %
Elementary	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 100%	1 25%	9 82%	3 30%	10 77%	7 27%	0 0%	47 47%	84 41%
English	3 27%	3 19%	0 0%	0 0%	1 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 11%	0 0%	13 13%	23 11%
Foreign Language	3 27%	2 12%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 5%	10 5%
Special Education	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 20%	0 0%	7 27%	0 0%	13 13%	22 11%
Mathematics	0 0%	3 19%	1 12%	0 0%	0 0%	1 9%	0 0%	2 15%	3 11%	2 50%	4 4%	16 8%
Physical Education	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 1%	1 <.5%
Instrumental Music	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 1%	1 <.5%
Vocal Music	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 1%	1 <.5%
Science	5 46%	7 44%	7 88%	0 0%	1 25%	1 9%	3 30%	0 0%	3 11%	2 50%	5 5%	34 17
Social Studies	0 0%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	1 25%	0 0%	2 20%	1 8%	2 8%	0 0%	6 6%	13 6%
Gender:												
Males	5 42%	5 31%	2 25%	1 14%	3 75%	0 0%	4 40%	2 15%	5 19%	2 50%	13 13%	42 20%
Females	7 58%	11 69%	6 75%	6 86%	1 25%	11 100%	6 60%	11 85%	21 81%	2 50%	84 87%	166 80%

Table 3

1992-93 Employment of Former Interns

Employment	7L	6L	5L	4L	4R	3L	3R	2L	2R	1L	1R	Total
Teacher in public/private school	10	7	7	9	5	11	13	12	24	6	92	196
	56%	41%	70%	100%	83%	85%	93%	71%	67%	100%	79%	75%
Substitute	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	6	11
	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	11%	0%	5%	4%
Aide	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Postsecondary Teacher	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
	6%	6%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	2%
Otherwise employed inthe field of education	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	5	11
	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%	8%	7%	6%	3%	0%	4%	4%
Graduate student	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7
	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%
Unemployed/housewife/ husehusband	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	3	8
	6%	0%	0%	0%	17%	8%	0%	0%	6%	0%	3%	3%
Other employment	3	6	2	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	6	23
	17%	36%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	11%	0%	5%	9%

Note. All interns included for whom employment information was available.

Note. Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 4

Teaching Activities of Respondents

Employment Activities	7L	6L	5L	4L	4R	3L	3R	2L	2R	1L	1R	Total
Have ever sought a teaching position	12	16	8	7	3	10	10	13	23	4	86	94
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	89%	100%	92%	97%
Career Pattern:												
1. Entered teaching, taught every year	5	7	6	5	4	8	7	7	17	6	92	66
	42%	44%	75%	71%	100%	73%	70%	54%	65%	100%	79%	62%
2. Entered teaching, taught periodically with periods of unemployment for personal reasons	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0			5
	17%	13%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%			5%
3. Entered teaching, moved to other types of employment, then resumed teaching	4	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	1			10
	33%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	4%			9%
4. Entered teaching, moved into administration or counseling	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0			1
	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%			1%
5. Began work in another field, then entered teaching, currently teaching	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2			6
	8%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	10%	8%	8%			6%
6. Began work in another field, then entered teaching, not now teaching	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			1
	0	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%			1%
7. Have never taught	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	25	8
	0%	13%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%	12%	0%	21%	7%
8. Other	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	3	3			10
	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	18%	10%	23%	12%			9%

program. In Tennessee, where a large percentage of graduates choose to remain after completing the teacher preparation program, public school finances were severely limited in the 1991-92 school year, forcing some school systems to reduce the number of teaching positions they could support that year and making it extremely difficult for newly certified teachers (2L and 2R) to obtain initial teaching positions.

Commitment to the profession among those not currently teaching varies. Three of the 12 respondents from the Lyndhurst interns with the longest time after graduation (7L) who were not teaching at the time of the survey reported that they did not plan to seek teaching positions in the future (see Table 5). Three of the 16 respondents from the six-year group (6L) also reported they were not teaching and had no plans to teach. Among the respondents from all the other groups, only one individual from the third-year group of regular interns (3R) had no future plans to teach.

The percentage of interns who planned to be teaching five years in the future varied considerably with no clear pattern across years since program completion. Some individuals may be planning to take time out to have children, go to graduate school, or for other personal reasons, not necessarily leaving the profession.

Discussion and Conclusions

Any conclusions drawn at this time would necessarily be very tentative. The numbers of interns were small in the early years of the program. Looking at percentages simplifies the task of making comparisons between groups, but one individual can account for a fairly large percentage in small groups of interns, whereas responses of one individual from a larger group would have less weight. As is true of most surveys, the data set is not complete. There are some interns for whom even the basic information of employment was not available, and information from those individuals might alter the overall results.

Other factors must also be considered. The Lyndhurst fellows were career change individuals who were usually older than traditional student teachers or regular interns. They already possessed the qualifications, and usually the experience, to change occupations if they were not satisfied with teaching. Having survived at least one career change (to teaching), the Lyndhurst interns may be more willing to consider other alternatives if the reality of teaching does not match their vision.

Individuals who complete the fifth-year internship have spent an extra year in the preparation program. This is an added expense, thus they may feel more pressure to find employment after completing the program. If teaching employment were not readily available, they may have accepted other employment for strictly monetary reasons. This is probably more applicable to regular interns, who received no financial assistance during the internship year, than to the Lyndhurst fellows.

Table 5

Employment and Future Plans of Respondents

Employment	7L	6L	5L	4L	4R	3L	3R	2L	2R	Total
Currently teaching in public/private school	6 50%	7 44%	4 63%	7 100%	3 75%	12 91%	9 90%	8 62%	18 69%	73 68%
Nonteachers' plans to seek a teaching position in the future										
Yes	1 8%	3 19%	0 0%	0 0%	1 25%	0 0%	0 0%	2 15%	4 15%	11 10%
No	3 25%	3 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 10%	0 0%	0 0%	7 7%
Undecided	1 8%	2 13%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 15%	2 7%	9 8%
No response	1 8%	1 6%	1 13%	0 0%	0 0%	1 9%	0 0%	1 8%	2 7%	7 7%
Plan to be teaching five years in the future (all respondents):										
Yes	5 42%	5 31%	6 75%	6 86%	2 50%	9 82%	4 40%	8 62%	21 81%	66 62%
No	3 25%	7 44%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 9%	2 20%	1 8%	2 8%	16 15%
Undecided	4 33%	4 25%	2 25%	1 14%	2 50%	1 9%	4 40%	4 31%	3 12%	25 23%

The interns have spent an entire year in the public schools. They have a more global and realistic perception of teaching and what is involved than does a student teacher. Those who are not truly committed to teaching are not likely to embark on, nor complete, the internship.

The availability of teaching positions is subject to fluctuation. Those who were ready to embark on their careers in the fall of 1991 found very limited teaching employment opportunities.

Some conclusions can be put forth on the basis of the limited amount of data thus far.

1. Those who complete the internship are committed to the profession. By the time two years had elapsed since program completion, all interns had applied for teaching positions. All of the

Lyndhurst respondents and nearly all of the regular interns from the two most recent years had sought teaching positions at the time of the survey.

2. Estimates of the number or percentage of interns who will enter the teaching profession that are based on employment information gathered during the first and/or second year after program completion are likely to be underestimates.

3. Only a very small percentage (7% overall) of the interns who had been certified for a year or more reported they had never taught. This compares favorably with the 16% to 25% reported in previous studies of student teachers (Boser, 1989; Chapman, 1986; and Heyns, 1988), and with the 14% of Merseth and Beals (1991) whose population of career change professionals in science and math was similar to the Lyndhurst interns.

4. The primary career pattern for interns is to enter teaching after completing the program (or after graduate school if they choose to complete a degree) and teach every year . The 62% of interns who had taught continuously in the current study far exceeds the 28% reported by Chapman (1986). However, the graduates surveyed by Chapman had been in the field far longer, and it is not unrealistic to expect that the percentage would decrease with the passage of time as individuals' careers become more prone to interruption for various reasons.

5. Interns who have completed the program more than five years ago are more likely to have left teaching temporarily for personal reasons or to go to other types of employment and return to teaching than those who have been certified for five years or less.

6. Nonteaching interns who completed the program more than five years ago are more likely to have decided to leave the profession than nonteachers who have completed the program more recently.

7. Interns who completed the program more than six years ago are more likely to be in full-time graduate study than interns who completed the program more recently.

8. The only groups of respondents in which all were teaching in 1992-93 were the Lyndhurst groups in their fourth year after program completion (4L), all of whom were certified to teach at the elementary level, and the first year Lyndhurst teachers (1L), all of whom were science and math teachers. Although Bobbitt, Faupel and Burns (1991) found almost identical attrition for elementary and secondary teachers across experience levels, this might be worthy of future study, particularly as it relates to interns.

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